
Why Hold a National Convention?

Letter to the Editor of *The American Socialist*,

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by Otto Pauls

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Unless action is taken to temporarily set aside Section 1 of Article IX of the party constitution, we will be compelled to hold a national convention next year, consisting of 300 delegates and costing about \$25,000, for the sole purpose of adopting a platform.

Many party members do not seem to be aware that our candidates for President and Vice President in 1916 will be nominated by referendum. The constitution so provides, however, and the 1916 convention, if held, will have nothing to do but to adopt a platform.

The existing platform of 1912 is an excellent one and requires little change for service in 1916. The statement of principles is splendid and leaves small excuse for chewing it over and restating the same thing in different words. The working program may need some slight revision but in the main is full and satisfactory.

Taking these circumstances into consideration, together with the great distress among the members resulting from unemployment, can anything be more foolish and suicidal for the party than to hold a \$25,000 convention next year? The efforts required to raise the money would be ridiculously out of proportion to the results possible of achievement by the convention. Just fancy the National Office trying to raise a campaign fund AFTER having dragged and sandbagged the en-

tire party movement in a frantic effort to meet the expense of a convention! How much campaign enthusiasm would survive such a wet blanket? In normal times it might be done but under present industrial conditions failure is certain and all hope of a vigorous campaign would be smothered.

Our present National Executive Committee can entertain suggestions from all who have anything to propose and then submit it to a referendum. It will be just as satisfactory as any convention platform and will save the party about \$25,000 — the difference between a rousing campaign and no campaign at all.

The present NEC is fairly representative of the party. Goebel and Maurer are from the east, Seidel and Germer are from the central portion, and LeSueur is in touch with the northwest. There is every reason to believe that their revision of the 1912 platform would be acceptable. Let us suspend the 1916 convention and devote our money and energy to making the real campaign what it should be.

It is the hope of the writer that there will be a vigorous discussion of this matter in the party press so that its gravity may be brought home to the membership and sensible action taken.

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